

# Annual Report

## 2024



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# Foreword by LAW's Executive Director



I am proud to share Legal Action Worldwide's latest Annual Report – a powerful reflection of the resilience, courage, and unwavering determination that define our work. Every achievement in this report is rooted in the strength of survivors and the tireless commitment of our staff and partners. Despite growing global instability, we continued to push boundaries to ensure justice is not a privilege, but a right.

This year brought significant developments. In **Syria**, the fall of Bashar Al-Assad's regime marked a new beginning. As Syrians seek to build their future, a survivor-led model of transitional justice is essential. We support this process by representing hundreds of survivors of detention and torture. Our seminal 2024 report "**It is Forever Stigma**" – **The Role of Gender Discrimination in the Syrian Government's Detention and Torture System**, produced with the Syrian Centre for Legal Studies and Research, exposed the gendered violence inherent in the state's detention system and reinforced the need for accountability rooted in survivor experiences.

Conflict continued to displace and endanger civilians across the region. In **Lebanon**, escalating violence between Israel and Hezbollah forced over a million people from their homes. Our teams responded swiftly, delivering legal aid to nearly 50,000 people and securing justice for many, including migrant domestic workers like MH, an Ethiopian woman subjected to slavery. Her case broke legal ground, as for the first time in Lebanese history, a judge summoned an accused employer to respond to slavery charges.

This commitment to upholding the law under extreme circumstances extended to the **occupied Palestinian territory**, where unrelenting violence disproportionately impacted women and children. LAW remained one of the few organisations fostering inclusive legal dialogue, bringing together Palestinian, Israeli, and international experts to advocate for civilian protection and the enforcement of international law.

Our work in **Ukraine** further underscored the universal reach of justice. In partnership with the Clooney Foundation for Justice, we brought forward a landmark complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee on behalf of victims of the 2022 Vinnytsia missile strike. By asserting the right to life under international law, we aim to establish the first legal decision addressing the crime of aggression – a vital step in holding aggressors accountable.

We saw progress in long-standing struggles for justice. In Argentina, the pursuit of accountability for the **genocide of the Rohingya** reached new heights. A federal court issued arrest warrants for 25 Myanmar officials – the first of their kind. Our clients included six courageous women who travelled from Cox's Bazar to testify. Their voices not only shaped the case, but also helped spark a historic application for an arrest warrant by the ICC Prosecutor against Myanmar's military leadership.

These milestones were mirrored in **Sri Lanka**, where our Gender Justice Legal Network supported 236 survivors of gender-based violence. With our help, women and children secured protection, navigated legal systems, and began to rebuild lives shaped by violence.

Throughout Africa, we continued to push precedent. In **South Sudan**, 35 survivors of sexual violence fought for seven years to protect their identities – and won. In a landmark decision, the UN CEDAW Committee agreed to transmit their case without revealing their names, setting a global standard for survivor safety before UN bodies. In Somalia, our trauma-informed legal support reached over 5,700 people, reinforcing our deep-rooted commitment to gender justice.

We also pursued international accountability. In partnership with Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, we filed a universal jurisdiction complaint in Germany on behalf of **eight Tigrayan victims** of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These actions, alongside our case before the African Commission, demonstrate how strategic litigation can challenge impunity at the highest levels.

We are increasingly alarmed by the targeting of **aid workers** in conflict zones. In response, our ECHO-funded programme expanded to support more than 10 humanitarian organisations and 40 individuals facing legal threats. Our report, **Justice and Accountability for Attacks on Aid Workers**, gained recognition from the UN Secretary-General, who incorporated some of our recommendations into Security Council briefings.

To strengthen the global gender justice movement, we launched the **Gender Justice Practitioner Hub (GJP Hub)** in December 2024, following two years of global consultation with over 800 experts. With support from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the GJP Hub now connects practitioners across borders, promoting knowledge-sharing and coordination to improve outcomes for survivors of core international crimes.

As we **look ahead to 2025**, we are emboldened by the momentum we've built. Justice for survivors is not a distant aspiration – it is a goal within reach, powered by collective will and unyielding hope. I am deeply grateful to our team, our Board, our partners, and above all, the survivors who lead and inspire us. Together, we will continue our fight for a more just and accountable world.

**Antonia Mulvey**

Founder and Executive Director,  
Legal Action Worldwide

# A message from LAW's Board – Carine Tohme



I am delighted to write this message on behalf of LAW's Board. This year has brought unimaginable suffering to countless civilians around the world, with aid workers tragically subjected to the same brutality. The cruelty of perpetrators is further compounded by the unchecked impunity they continue to enjoy, unchallenged by the systems meant to hold them accountable. International Humanitarian Law, the foundation of our shared commitment to justice as accountability relentlessly undermined, fostering a pervasive cynicism that undermines the very essence of human rights. Too many serious violations go unpunished, and the failure of states to take meaningful action has created a climate where accountability seems distant. In these dark and difficult times, it is easy to lose hope. But this is where we stand resolute. LAW has remained steadfast in its mission to support victims and survivors, placing them at the center of our efforts and empowering them to lead the fight for the justice they so rightfully deserve.

Under the remarkable leadership and vision of Antonia Mulvey, LAW has navigated these difficult times with resilience and determination. Though the road has been tough, it is in these moments of crisis that our mission becomes even more critical. Now, more than ever, we must stand shoulder to shoulder with victims and survivors, amplifying their voices and helping them reclaim the justice and accountability they so rightfully deserve.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the survivors who have trusted LAW. Your courage in the face of adversity is inspiring. By working with us, you are not only seeking justice, but also showing other victims and survivors they are not alone. From the pioneering case of slavery and slave trading Lebanon to the demands for justice in Ukraine, South Sudan, Syria, Bangladesh and Myanmar, LAW stands with countless individuals. Our work is only possible because of our dedicated team and the unwavering support of our donors. LAW remains a lifeline for victims, ensuring that the fight for justice and human dignity continues, even in the darkest of times.

I am incredibly proud of what LAW has accomplished this year, and I remain hopeful for the future. Our mission is as crucial as ever, and with the continued dedication of our staff and partners, we will keep pushing forward until justice is restored.

## **Carine Tohme**

Board Member,  
Legal Action Worldwide

# A message from a Syrian survivor of detention and sexual violence

I was freed from Al Adra prison outside Damascus on December 8, 2024, after being imprisoned by Assad's regime for more than 10 years. I was 21 years old when I was arrested by the Regime forces near my house in Barze, because my brother has already joined the opposition. I was three months pregnant. I lost my baby under torture.

December 8 is a significant date in my life. I felt relief and disbelief on that day. After years in prisons and having suffered physical and psychological abuse, having been raped, and having lived the constant fear of death, the moment when I heard the doors of the cell opening and boys telling us that we were released, it felt surreal. It could not be true. It was as if I was escaping from a nightmare. I looked at my fellow detainees' faces, and we were all questioning ourselves, were we free for real? Or was this moment going to slip away just like any other moment?

I cried and cried. I was scared. I felt disoriented. I thought that the Regime forces were going to arrest us again after walking out of the prison. I walked out and walked for two hours until I reached Douma. I called my mother. I cannot describe the feeling when I heard her voice after more than 10 years. I was born again on that day.

However, I felt anger towards those responsible for my suffering, the disappearance of my husband, and the loss of my baby. Then I met a LAW field lawyer, who explained to me that justice can be achieved and that the people who did this to me could be held accountable. The LAW lawyer empowered and motivated me to speak out and share my story so that what happened to me does not happen to other women and girls again. LAW gives me strength in surviving the painful 10 years that I spent in Assad prisons as we work together for justice and accountability for what happened to me. I cannot forget what happened.

Zahra Ahmad (pseudonym), aged 33, Syria



# LAW at a glance



## Who we are and what we do

Legal Action Worldwide is an independent non-profit association comprised of creative human rights lawyers and jurists, unified in our belief that those who have experienced grave human rights violations, should receive targeted, survivor-centred, gender-competent and trauma-informed support to access the justice they deserve. LAW's team works on the ground in conflict contexts combining national and international expertise with a deep understanding of victim and survivor needs and wishes. This approach provides a unique opportunity to address violence experienced; to bring national, regional and international



attention to the situation and to break the cycle of impunity and recurrence. LAW places survivors at the centre of the drive for justice and empowers them in transforming from victim, to survivor to advocate. We work directly with survivors and their communities, building their capacity to meaningfully engage with justice and advocacy processes. Alongside this, we provide technical assistance to strengthen justice institutions to ensure they are equipped to deliver the justice that survivors need, and work with legislators to promote accountability and the rule of law. In collaboration with survivors, their communities and national justice actors, LAW undertakes creative accountability strategies, including strategic litigation at national, regional and international levels. These initiatives are driven by victim and survivor justice priorities, whether this be criminal justice, state accountability, reparations or truth – transformative justice, tailored to the needs of those who need it most.



### **Our Vision**

*"A world where all victims and survivors have access to justice, so that impunity is not a barrier to sustainable peace."*



### **Our Mission**

*"To empower individuals and communities who have suffered from human rights violations and international crimes to obtain justice and strengthen institutions to deliver justice to them."*

## Where we work



### LAW works across four continents:

Africa	Asia	Middle East	Americas	Europe
Ethiopia, Kenya (regional office), Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia	Bangladesh (regional office), Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand	Jordan, Lebanon (regional office), Iraq, occupied Palestinian territory, Turkey	Argentina, US	Switzerland (HQ), Ukraine

## How we work



**Legal aid:** We empower survivors and their communities to regain agency by providing legal information, assistance and representation to those who have experienced serious human rights violations and abuses, including gender-based violence, in conflict-affected areas.



**Strategic litigation:** We seek to bring about transformative changes in the law, practice or public awareness by bringing carefully selected cases in domestic, regional and international courts and other justice mechanisms. In doing so, the security and protection of claimants and witnesses is paramount.



**Technical Assistance:** We provide advice and mentoring to legal, justice and civil society actors, strengthening their ability to protect, assist, and represent victims and survivors. We work with justice institutions and national partners to strengthen their ability to deliver effective, survivor-centred, gender committed justice and to uphold human rights and the rule of law.



**Advocacy:** We amplify the voices of survivors and raise awareness and understanding of their issues, experiences, and their fight for justice. We place survivors at the centre of advocacy efforts and increase their capacity to design and implement their own initiatives. All of LAW's work is supported by in-depth research and policy analysis.

LAW's key thematic focuses are:



### Addressing Discrimination

Discrimination often underlies the human rights violations faced by survivors and victims assisted by LAW. Many clients, including minors, experience discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics. This gender-based discrimination can manifest as sexual and gender-based violence, affecting individuals across the gender spectrum. Discrimination also occurs due to other inherent traits like race, nationality, ethnicity, or disability. These various forms of discrimination frequently intersect compounding challenges for individuals. LAW recognizes that addressing these interconnected issues is crucial in its work to protect human rights and support victims.



### Ending Impunity

The lack of accountability for perpetrators of serious human rights violations and international crimes is a central factor in the continuation of these acts. LAW works to ensure that where such conduct occurs, those most responsible are held accountable, be they state actors, military actors, non-state actors, humanitarian actors, other private individuals, or corporate entities.



### Securing transformative Justice

Justice must bring about change for those who need it – victims and survivors must not end up in a situation which is the same or worse than that in which they started. This may require reparations, legislative or policy reform, or significant changes in attitudes. Transformative justice seeks to guarantee non-recurrence of rights violations and promote truth-telling. It must be locally driven and inclusive, recognising those different communities and different individuals (men, women, children, LGBTQI+ communities, etc) experience conflict and human rights violations in different ways: not only in the types of violations but also in terms of their long-term impact.



### Strengthening Access to Justice and the Rule of Law

Working towards the removal of the barriers that prevent victims and survivors from accessing justice. This entails adopting a survivor-centred approach when supporting and working directly with the communities and victims that LAW represents and supporting other actors in adopting a survivor centred approach, strengthening justice institutions to better accommodate survivors and victims, no matter their background or social status, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, race, ethnicity, age or other status.

# Approaches and Principles

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## **Holistic and Trauma-informed:**

LAW works in coordination with other organisations to build robust referral systems to ensure that survivors and victims receive a holistic set of services, including medical, psychosocial and other essential services. All legal services are trauma-informed.

## **Gender Proactive:**

LAW recognises the different experience of women, men, girls and boys, as well as members of LGBTQI+ communities, affected by human rights violations and abuses. Their concerns and experiences are fundamental in the design, implementation, and approaches of LAW's legal assistance programmes. Additionally, LAW works directly on gender equality and gender justice issues – tackling head-on deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudices which prevent the meaningful participation of these groups in justice, transition or peacebuilding efforts. LAW recognises that without addressing gender discrimination, cycles of violence will continue – within families, communities and even on an international scale.

## **Intersectional and Feminist:**

In addition to being gender proactive, LAW's approach is explicitly feminist. It seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures which perpetuate discrimination and inequality, and which undermine peace and security. Alongside this, LAW acknowledges that multiple identities, (including race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability) may shape individual experiences – we seek to centralise voices which have traditionally been marginalised, address other structural drivers of inequality and foster inclusivity at all levels.

## **Survivor and Victim-Centred:**

Understanding the justice priorities and demands of the victims and survivors with which LAW works takes precedence and informs project design, including objectives, from retributive

justice, through to reparations and non-recurrence. Moreover, where safe and appropriate to do so, LAW will seek to empower survivors and victims by enabling them to lead justice efforts. This approach amplifies survivor voices in their fight for justice and ensures that they play a directing role in advocacy initiatives. Through this process survivors are empowered to act as advocates for themselves, their community, as Champions for Justice.

## **Locally driven:**

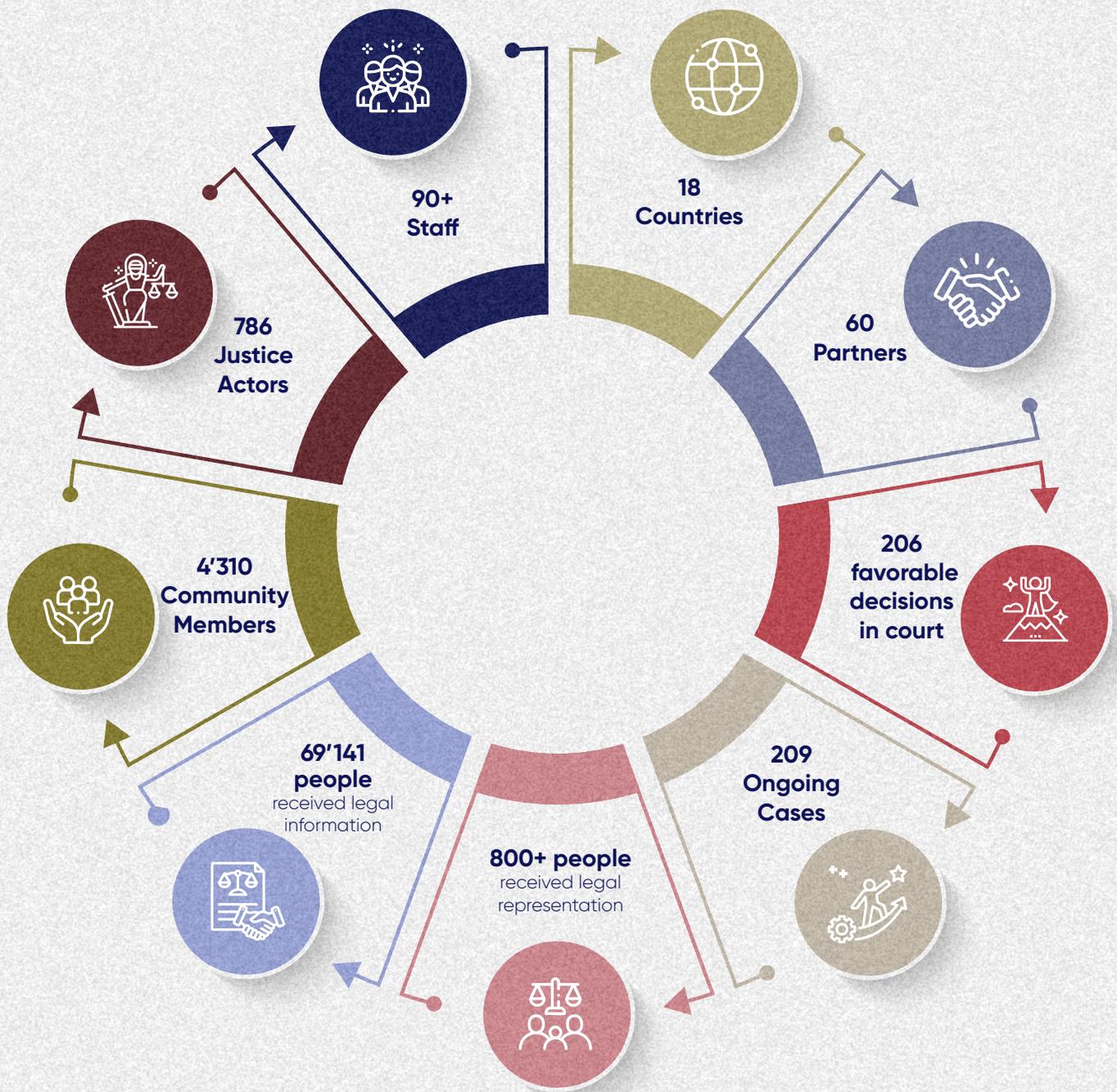
LAW understands that, where possible, justice at home is often more tangible for a larger numbers of beneficiaries. Additionally, the impact of technical assistance to national justice institutions has far more impact on the reestablishment of the Rule of Law and plays a role in guarantees of non-recurrence of mass human rights violations and international crimes.

## **LAW prioritises working intensively over extensively:**

With a long-term presence in the field, LAW forms significant and lasting relationships with survivors and victims. In doing so, these individuals and communities benefit from the ability to ask questions over time and to be continually consulted and updated (victims / survivors) and mentored and advised (justice actors). Equally, LAW benefits from an in-depth knowledge of community desires, needs and interests as they evolve over time, learning from their feedback and providing input into projects.

## **Collaborative and supportive:**

LAW leverages existing expertise and seeks to foster impactful partnerships and networks – both externally and internally. By creating working groups, mentorships, and allowing for flexibility in work arrangements when possible, LAW strives to create an environment that balances the professional and personal lives of all who work for LAW and with LAW.



# LAW 10 years Anniversary

## LAW celebrated 10 years

In 2024 we proudly commemorate a decade of working with victims and survivors of human rights violations and international crimes. Ten years implementing a survivor-centered, gender-sensitive approach to creatively use the law to improve access to justice for victims and survivors. Ten years at the frontlines of conflict-affected and fragile regions, providing legal redress and support to the most vulnerable. Ten years of groundbreaking work shaping the landscape for a more equitable international criminal law field.

We marked the occasion on March 5, when more than 150 survivors and victims, partners, Board members, Government representatives, UN, academics and civil society came together to celebrate this milestone.



*I remember LAW's work in Somalia. I was so impressed by the incredible work LAW has been doing in crafting legislation on sexual gender-based violence in a very difficult context. We then had many subsequent conversations on Myanmar, South Sudan and many other situations. It shows how important it is to work on the issue of rule of law in relation to women rights, and gender equality and sexual gender-based violence in particular. Not only from the legal side, but also from the accountability and transitional justice side.*

**Volker Turk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

*Happy Anniversary to Legal Action Worldwide! From Myanmar to Syria, Lebanon to Tigray, your team of talented human rights lawyers has worked tirelessly to document and combat crimes against civilians. The Clooney Foundation is proud to be working with you to advance justice for survivors of atrocity crimes. At a dark time in the world, we need allies to wage justice, and I am proud to call you one of ours.*

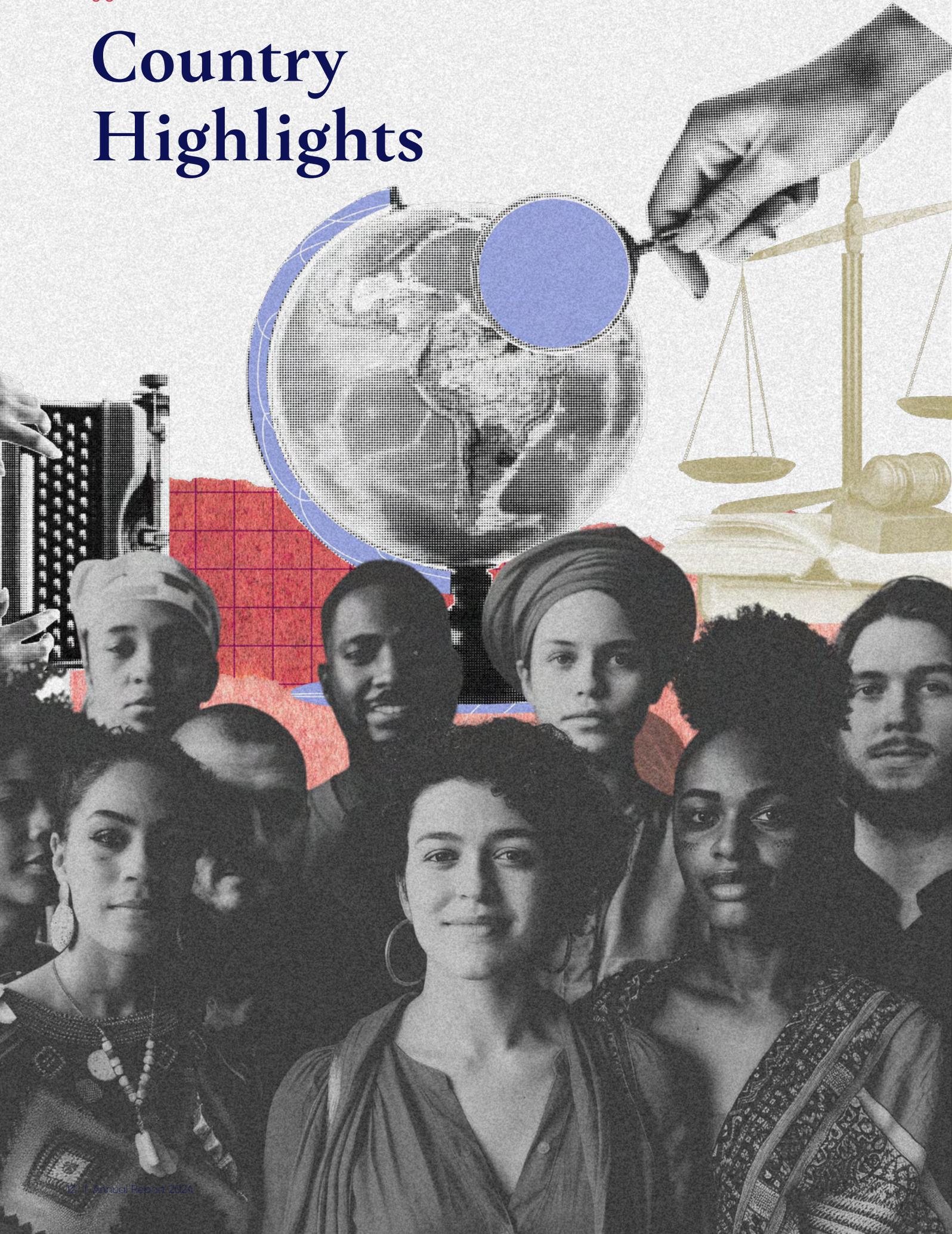
**Amal Clooney, Lebanese-British Barrister**

Read our 10 years report [here](#).

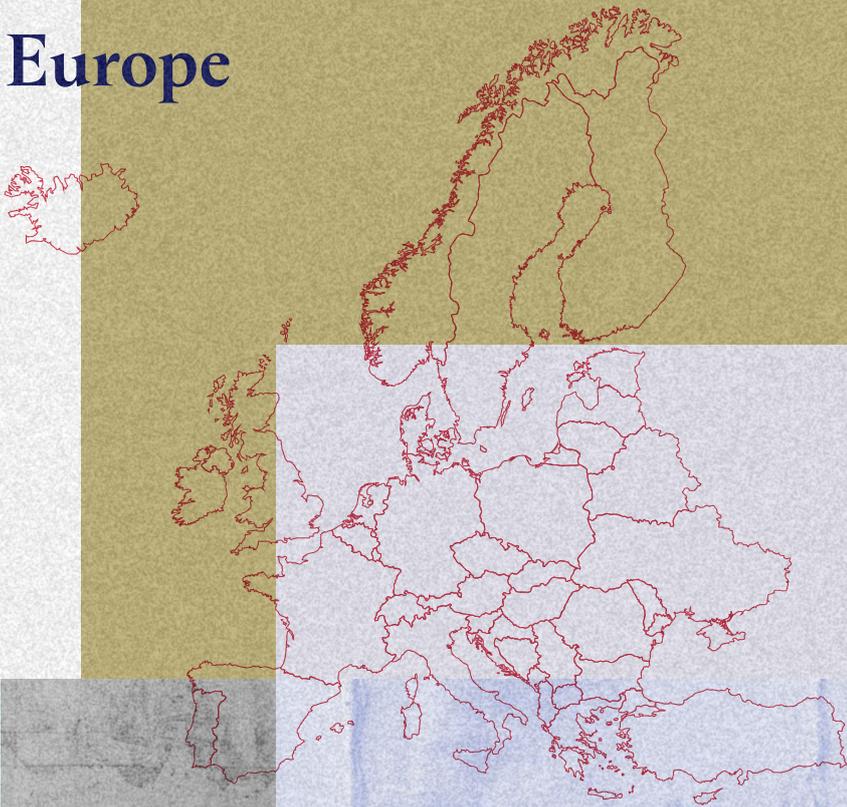
Watch our 10 years documentary [here](#).



# Country Highlights



# Europe





## Ukraine

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian forces have committed uncountable acts of violence, including international crimes and human rights violations against Ukrainians. The Russian military has levelled cities with indiscriminate shelling, executed civilians and prisoners of war, tortured thousands in a network of illegal detention centers, and committed acts of sexual violence against women, men, and children. While Ukrainian authorities, supported by international institutions, have made important strides in addressing these violations significant challenges remain given the scale of the violence.

LAW represents Ukrainian victims and survivors, initiating strategic litigation and advocacy on their behalf to advance meaningful justice. In July 2024, alongside partner organizations, the Clooney Foundation for Justice and Truth Hounds, LAW filed a complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) on behalf

of 18 Ukrainians killed by Russian missile attack that killed 29 people and injured over 200. The joint complaint argues that Russia violated the right to life of all those killed by an attack on the city of Vinnytsia on July 14, 2022.



*“Nothing will bring our loved ones back,” said 40-year-old Yaroslav, whose wife was killed and seven-year-old son severely injured by the strike. “But we are determined to do everything we can to bring justice to them, and countless others, who are still being killed in Ukraine every day.”*

The case has global precedent-setting potential—if accepted, it would be the first time Russia’s deadly attacks in Ukraine would be qualified as a violation of a core international human rights treaty and could open a new avenue to justice for millions of Ukrainians. It would allow all civilians, as well as soldiers who died defending their country from the invasion, to seek redress. Crucially, it would also be the first time that Russia’s acts are qualified as aggression by an international judicial body.

We presented the case to hundreds of participants, including dozens of country representatives at a side event to the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council. The event centered the voices of two women whose children had been killed in the Vinnytsia attack and urged all participants to support the case and ensure that Russia compensates the families of all those killed by its war of aggression in Ukraine.

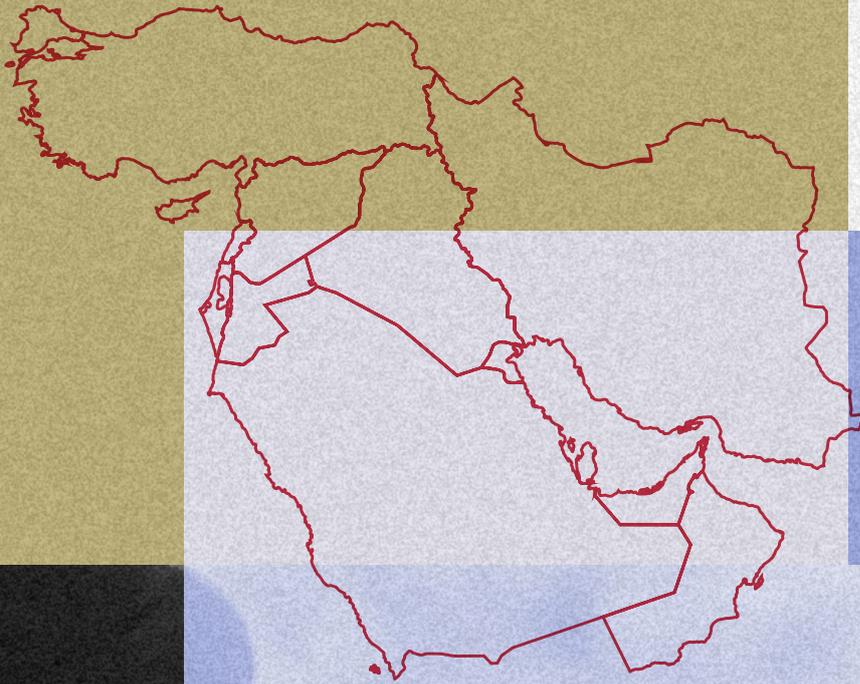
LAW's work in Ukraine is made possible through a women-led Consortium, including OPORA and JurFem, which work alongside our staff on the ground. We work in communities every day to collect evidence of international crimes and human rights violations. This includes visits to the field and the collection of evidence through open sources. This year, LAW's partners conducted interviews with over 150 possible witnesses of atrocity crimes and supported 36 clients in domestic conflict-related sexual violence proceedings. In the coming years, this evidence will form the bulk of our cases against individual perpetrators or Russia.

We support our partners and Ukrainian authorities to ensure they conduct their work in line with trauma-informed and gender-sensitive approaches. In July 2024, LAW held a two-day training in Lviv for lawyers and experts from JurFem. Alongside Consortium staff, the training featured participants from the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group for Ukraine, two key institutions advancing justice in this context. The training gave JurFem experts a framework for understanding universal jurisdiction theory and practice and cooperation with the ICC as a civil society organization.

Looking forward, LAW's Ukraine team will rely on evidence collected to file strategic litigation cases on behalf of Ukrainian victims and survivors. Our top priority is addressing widespread gender-based crimes, which remain under-investigated, and ensuring full representation in cases from women, men, and children.



# Middle East

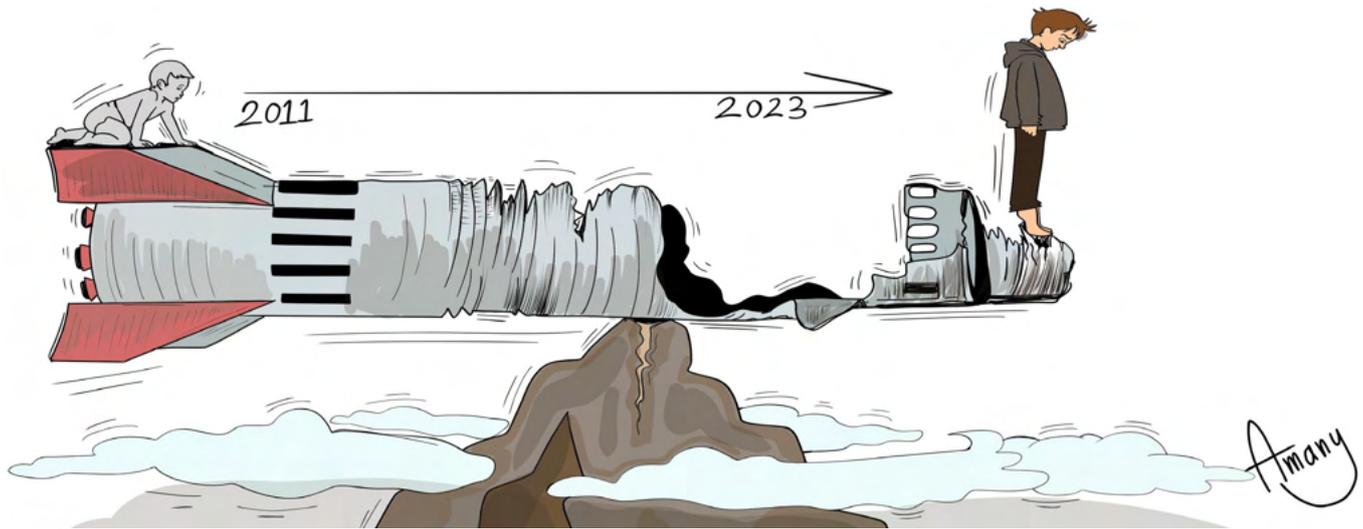




After 24 years in power, Bashar al-Assad has been deposed, ending his tenure of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against his own people. As Syrians turn to their future, accountability for the crimes that have characterized the Syrian conflict must take priority. LAW is working to ensure that the destruction and disregard for law and human rights that characterized the past do not continue. Justice and accountability must take center stage. To this end, in December 2024, LAW began utilizing its networks to officially register inside Syria and begin working more comprehensively on the ground in formerly Assad government-controlled Syria.

In addition to the end of Assad rule, 2024 brought in a series of legal rulings delivering justice to survivors of atrocity crimes in Syria. In Germany and the Netherlands, universal jurisdiction cases against various armed group members and Syrian government officials have continued. In France, a trial in absentia resulted in guilty verdicts for detention and torture against three formerly high-ranking Syrian officials. Canada and the Netherlands' UN Convention Against Torture case at the International Court of Justice against Syria is also progressing, as are LAW-led advocacy efforts for the International Criminal Court to open an investigation into cross-border crimes between Syria and Jordan. LAW is also supporting various domestic and international proceedings for justice for the victims of crimes in Syria.

LAW's Syria team produced several achievements in 2024. LAW shared 38 witness statements (30 women and eight men), developed after comprehensive forensic interviews, describing SGBV in Syrian government detention, with the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM) for its evidentiary database and reporting. LAW also sent the IIIM 15 accounts from survivors of torture in Syrian government detention. Collectively, evidence from these statements and accounts informed LAW's seminal report, developed with the Syrian Centre for Legal Studies



and Research, **“It is Forever Stigma” – The Role of Gender Discrimination in the Syrian Government’s Detention and Torture System**. “It is Forever Stigma” is the most in-depth analysis of firsthand evidence of gender discrimination in Syrian government prisons. It was described by Lynn Welchman, Commissioner at the Independent, International Commission of Inquiry for the Syrian Arab Republic, as “documenting and clarifying additional layers of gender discrimination,” and “critical in bringing urgent attention to what thousands of victims are going through still.”<sup>1</sup>

LAW’s Syria team spent the last year continuing to collect evidence, including survivor statements, for numerous case files addressing crimes in Syria to contribute to accountability efforts in international, regional, and domestic courts.

In the past year, LAW began assisting, through subgrants and organizational capacity support, three new grassroots Syrian organizations focused on accountability for survivors of atrocity crimes in different regions of Syria. As part of its capacity building, LAW led two trainings for 46 documenters working in Syria, Lebanon, and/or Iraq with survivors of crimes in Syria. The trainings focused on evidence collection and interviewing to a high legal standard, while also highlighting and discussing core humanitarian principles. One of the trainings provided an additional module on sexual violence and the particulars of evidence of such violence.

LAW continues to advocate for a State Party referral of the situation in Jordan–Syria, with regards to cross border international crimes, to the ICC. In the past year this work included the publication of an **op-ed** discussing the legal theory behind a referral along with extensive closed and **opened door** advocacy, in cooperation with the Syrian Forum, including a well-attended side event at the ICC’s Assembly of States Parties meeting in The Hague in December 2024.

As LAW’s Syria program looks ahead, it will continue building out various casefiles using its intersectional and layered approach, addressing survivors of crimes committed by all parties in all areas of Syria. As pathways to justice focus on extraterritorial cases, LAW will adapt its approach to support such cases, particularly in Europe. LAW will continue to vigorously lobby for a State Party referral of Jordan–Syria to the ICC, as well as a potential Article 12(3) declaration permitting jurisdiction across the territory of Syria. LAW stands ready to support the ICJ case against Syria, and work with regional and domestic courts in the Middle East. As fresh conflict grips the country, LAW and its partners will continue to document crimes and collect evidence for future accountability processes.

“ *The “It is a Forever Stigma” report provides us with detailed analysis into the gendered experience of detention in Syria, documenting and clarifying additional layers of gender discrimination within the Syrian detention structures. It stands to be critical in bringing urgent attention to what thousands of victims are going through still.*

**Lynn Welchman, Commissioner, The Independent International Commission of Inquiry for the Syrian Arab Republic**



## Lebanon

Since 2019, Lebanon has been struggling through multiple crises that have deeply impacted its people. In October 2023, conflict between Hezbollah and Israel broke out along Lebanon's southern border and other locations in the country's east. In September 2024, Israel unleashed a comprehensive aerial campaign and sent troops into Lebanon, displacing over a million people, injuring over 15,000, and killing approximately 4,000 people. The country's descent into all-out war in 2024 presented a series of new potential threats to vulnerable populations that LAW has sought to respond to. LAW reacted by extending its outreach to potential victims of SGBV among displaced persons; supporting displaced persons who were being discriminated against in aid distribution, namely non-Lebanese and migrant workers; and documenting war crimes and crimes against humanity. Two social media posts sharing LAW's emergency services reached nearly 50,000 people.

Despite the conflict, LAW continued to support vulnerable populations. These include women and girls subject to domestic violence or other SGBV, migrant domestic workers, and the LGBTQI+ community. Throughout 2024, LAW provided legal information to 1,504 people (108 men and 1,320 women and girls), legal assistance to 153 people (3 men and 150 women), and legal representation to 31 persons (2 men and 29 women), from various backgrounds including stateless persons, Syrians, Lebanese, and migrant workers from East Africa and Asia. Representation cases included assisting clients in completing divorces, gaining restraining orders or other services in response to sex and gender-based violence incidents, and remedying unpaid wage issues. One 58-year-old woman who received legal information from LAW shared, "I personally benefitted from this session, and I learned to benefit other woman specially that many do not know the procedures and the regulations. I learned a lot about marriage and child registration."



*"I advise every woman who is facing violence of any type to report it and to talk to the respective organizations such LAW to talk about her story and do not be afraid.", married woman, 57 years old*

LAW has continued to build the capacity of domestic lawyers on gender sensitivity and international legal issues. LAW held four training sessions in 2024. Two of these training sessions were delivered to LAW's novel Gender Justice Network, a cadre of 21 Lebanese lawyers (8 men and 13 women) committed to gender justice and willing to take sex and gender-based violence cases that are referred to LAW or its partners. The trainings for the Gender Justice Network focused on protection, identifying and investigating sexual exploitation and abuse, and countering gender

violence within the Women, Peace, and Security framework in times of conflict and its aftermath. A third training on international human rights law was provided to 13 lawyers (5 men and 8 women) in May 2024. One trainee from that capacity building session shared “The most important skill in understanding international law is recognizing the differences between various laws and treaties. This can be best achieved through real-life case studies that provide clarity and practical understanding.” A fourth, first-of-its-kind, training was delivered to 15 Lebanese youth. It focused on effectively developing and implementing advocacy campaigns to drive meaningful social development within local communities and champion critical human rights issues. One trainee, a young woman aged 18, shared, “This training has really opened my eyes to the complexities of international relations and how they intersect with community service.” In conjunction with this training, LAW developed content for an online advocacy campaign course targeting young adults aged 18 to 25. The course was added to LAW’s website, creating a ripple effect among young people interested in human rights advocacy.

LAW also provided funding to its partner Helem to conduct 12 training sessions for 144 participants on LGBTQI+ awareness-raising. Furthermore, LAW provided funding to its partner SHIFT to conduct 88 awareness sessions on the latest protection trends and to hold three community events. These sessions included psychosocial support (PSS) activities aimed at youth and caregivers, promoting community sensitization in an engaging and interactive way, and ensuring active participation while learning. All these efforts were in addition to LAW conducting eight of its own round tables and focus group discussions, reaching 179 people, on different legal issues related to human rights that practitioners around the country.

In 2024, LAW continued to lead the way in pursuing strategic litigation on behalf of migrant workers in Lebanon to dismantle the Kafala System, which amounts to modern-day slavery and forced labor. In 2024, the case of LAW’s client MH faced procedural challenges. In October 2020 LAW filed an initial criminal complaint in Lebanese criminal court against MH’s employer and recruiter due to the enslavement and verbal and physical assault she experienced for eight-and-a-half years. In 2024, the assigned investigative judge held hearings to question MH’s employer. MH now resides in Ethiopia and initially faced barriers to participating in the proceeding. At first, the judge refused MH the chance to testify virtually and did not permit MH sufficient time to appear in person. LAW appealed both of these decisions. The judge then reversed course and scheduled a hearing in May 2025 for MH to deliver her testimony in person.

As LAW Lebanon looks to the future and continues to adapt to the post-conflict context, it will continue to serve the most vulnerable populations, helping them access legal support, particularly with regards to SGBV, and pursuing strategic litigation on behalf of migrant workers and those discriminated against on the basis of their identity or sexual orientation, while also growing its network of practitioners engaged on such issues and inspiring new youth advocates.



# Occupied Palestinian Territory

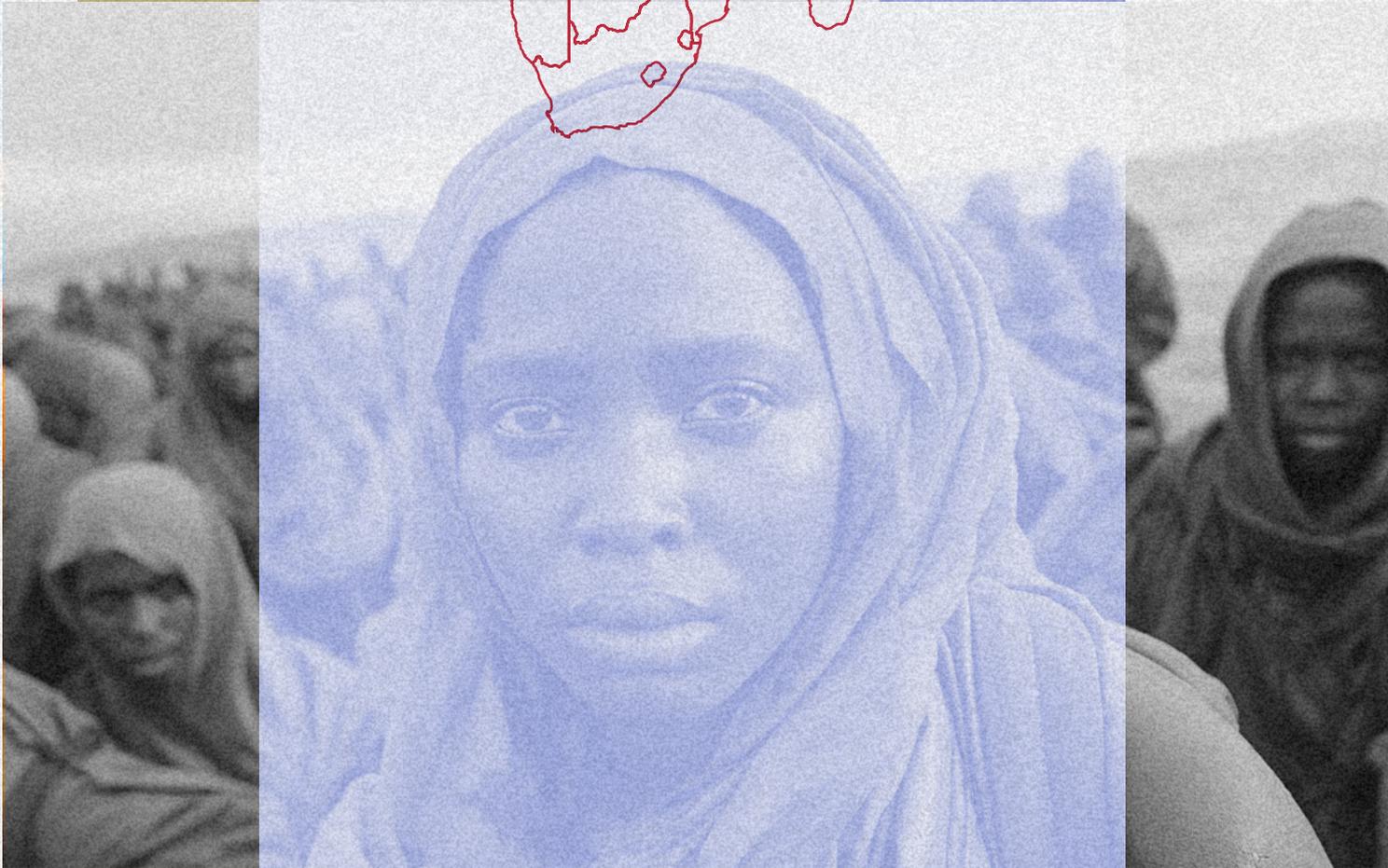
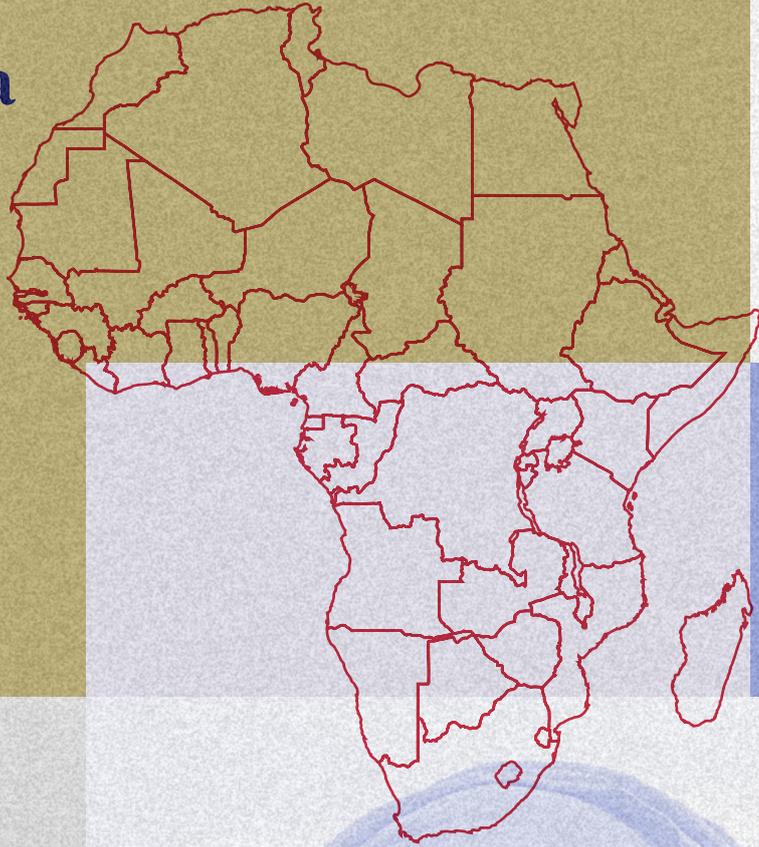


2024 has been a year of unprecedented violence, with civilians bearing the brunt of relentless attacks. Despite immense challenges, LAW continues to be a trusted legal partner for victims and survivors, supporting their demands for justice and accountability.

LAW remains one of the few organizations engaging with both Palestinian, Israeli, and international leading legal experts. Through high-level roundtables, legal professionals have come together to foster critical dialogue on the protection of civilians and the legal consequences of ongoing violations. In response to escalating violations, legal support has been provided to those most in need, including aid workers, children, and victims of corporate misconduct. Beyond direct support, LAW has continued to strengthen the human rights movement through high-impact training sessions for leading organizations, equipping activists and lawyers with the legal tools necessary to document violations and advocate effectively.

In a time of escalating violence and impunity, LAW's work has never been more vital, standing at the forefront of legal advocacy to protect civilians and uphold international law.

# Africa





## South Sudan

In 2024, South Sudan took a crucial step towards the creation of two long-awaited transitional justice mechanisms contemplated under the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). On 3 September 2024, South Sudan's Transitional Legislative Assembly adopted the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) Bills, and in November 2024, the President passed both bills into law.

However, in a significant setback, on 21 September 2024, the Transitional Constitution was amended, extending by another two years the transitional governance arrangements in place under the 2018 R-ARCSS, not only further delaying elections originally scheduled for December 2024, but also deferring action on human rights and peace, including the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS).

LAW and its partners have continued to advocate for survivor-centred approaches in the CRA and CTRH bills. In addition, while there is a strong legislative framework in South Sudan, the definitions and penalties for crimes of gender-based violence are outdated and regulations affecting women and girls are discriminatory. Changes are needed to increase women and

girls' access to justice and to improve gender equality in South Sudan. LAW and its partners have become key actors in the advocacy for the revision and passing of the Gender Based Violence Bill according to regional and international standards, building a crucial relationship with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

In 2024, in a groundbreaking decision, and after 6 years of overcoming procedural hurdles, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) agreed to transmit a communication to the state of South Sudan without disclosing the identities of the victims. LAW and 35 South Sudanese women who were subjected to sexual violence, including gang rape and sexual slavery, and other atrocities, including seeing their children killed in front of them had filed several communications since 2018. The survivors sought South Sudan's acknowledgement



*“We have suffered from stigma from the community because of the rape and we want justice” said Mary, survivor (name changed to protect identity)*

*“I am happy that this case [will be] opened, it has been long overdue, we have been looking forward to this.” - Adeng, survivor (name changed to protect identity)*

of what happened to them, to ensure the crimes are never committed again, and requested protection of their identities from the South Sudan due to security concerns. This decision opens the door for survivors around the world to seek justice, as victims of conflict-related sexual violence rarely make complaints against their States out of fear of reprisals. Protecting the identity of survivors is a crucial step in the path to justice.

In 2024, in partnership with the South Sudan Law Society, LAW also continued to operate Justice Confidence Centres (JCC), including from July onward by employing three lawyers in Wau and Malakal. **The JCCs provided free legal assistance, advice and representation to over 100 victims and survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination in 2024. And secured 12 victories in the courts for victims and survivors of rape, forced marriage, domestic violence, conflict related sexual violence and arbitrary detention on accusation of adultery.** In one case, a JCC lawyer represented a woman who had been detained arbitrarily in the detention centre for over 18 months after she resisted an attempted rape perpetrated by a man in uniform. The client and her son were detained without charges following the assault. The JCC lawyer brought the case to the public prosecutor, flagging the absence of a police file and charges, which led to their immediate release.

In addition, two of LAW’s partners, the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice and the Assistance Mission for Africa, continued to work with 180 survivors from seven different survivor groups to create their own transformative justice mechanisms and advocate for the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms.



## Ethiopia

The situation in Ethiopia remains volatile. The conflict in Tigray, which began in November 2020, was formally ended with the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), between representatives of the Federal Government and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) in November 2022. The period of active hostilities, however, laid bare deep ethnic divisions across the country, and catalysed the deterioration of the security situation in other regions of the country. Allegations of human rights violations and abuses, some amounting to international crimes, continued long after the signing of the CoHA and continue in some areas today.

In September, eight survivors of the conflict in northern Ethiopia, including a former humanitarian aid worker and a former interim government official, filed a **groundbreaking criminal complaint with the German Federal Public Prosecutor** alleging that twelve senior Ethiopian and Eritrean government officials and military officers committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict. These survivors, like hundreds of thousands of others, are victims and witnesses of sexual violence, arbitrary detention, torture, and starvation, and thus far have been denied access to justice for their suffering. As one of their only hopes for accountability, these survivors, some of whom currently reside in Germany, have requested the German Federal Public Prosecutor open an investigation into these crimes. The complaint the eight Tigrayan survivors have filed attempts to seek accountability for some of these atrocities. Prepared by their representatives Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) and Dr. Anna Oehmichen, with support from Debevoise & Plimpton LLP and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), the

complaint requests the German Federal Public Prosecutor to open an investigation into the alleged crimes under the legal principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows states to prosecute international crimes committed abroad due to the egregious nature of the underlying conduct.

This is the second complaint filed by LAW and its partner Debevoise and Plimpton LLP on behalf of Tigrayan victims, the first of which was filed before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), in partnership with the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU). The communication was filed against the Federal Government of Ethiopia, alleging violations of its obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights during the conflict. In October 2022 the African Commission issued an order for emergency provisional measures requesting Ethiopia guarantee an end to allegations including of extrajudicial killings and sexual violence. The ACHPR has the power to decide and is currently considering whether Ethiopia violated its obligations under the African Charter. It also has the power to request remedies from Ethiopia, including remedies for the victims. The case is ongoing.

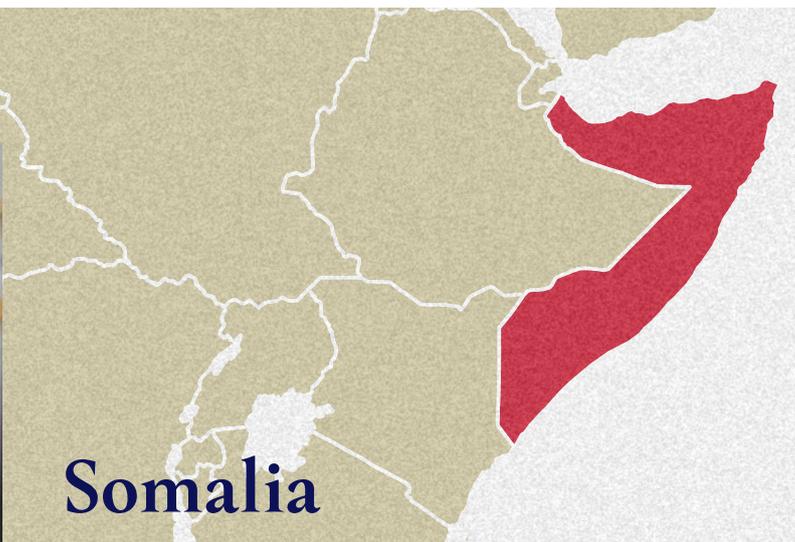


*'It's been a privilege to work with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) to be a voice for the voiceless people of Tigray. I've lost two of the most important people in my life in this war: my younger brother and my mom. The suffering and agony continue. Tigrayans are still dying every day. We urgently need to bring to justice those who orchestrated and engineered these unimaginable crimes in Tigray – this would bring peace of mind to me and to the people of Tigray.*

*Tsega, a male survivor, name changed to protect identity.*

*We are honored to partner with LAW again to seek accountability on behalf of victims of the forgotten war in Tigray. We hope the German Federal Public Prosecutor heeds our call to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these horrific crimes, in light of Ethiopia's ongoing failure to hold the perpetrators to account domestically.*

**Catherine Amirfar, Co-Chair of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP's International Dispute Resolution and Public International Law Groups**



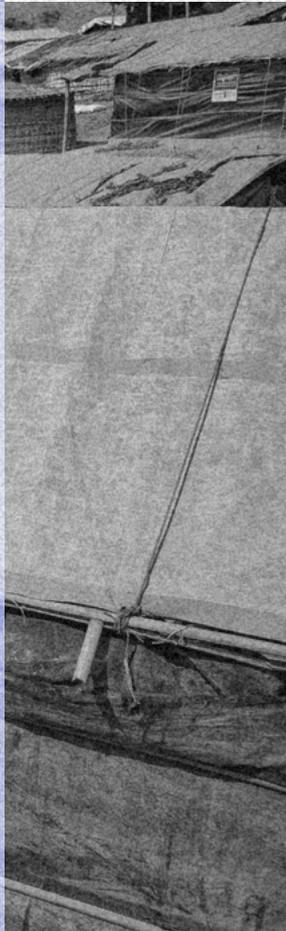
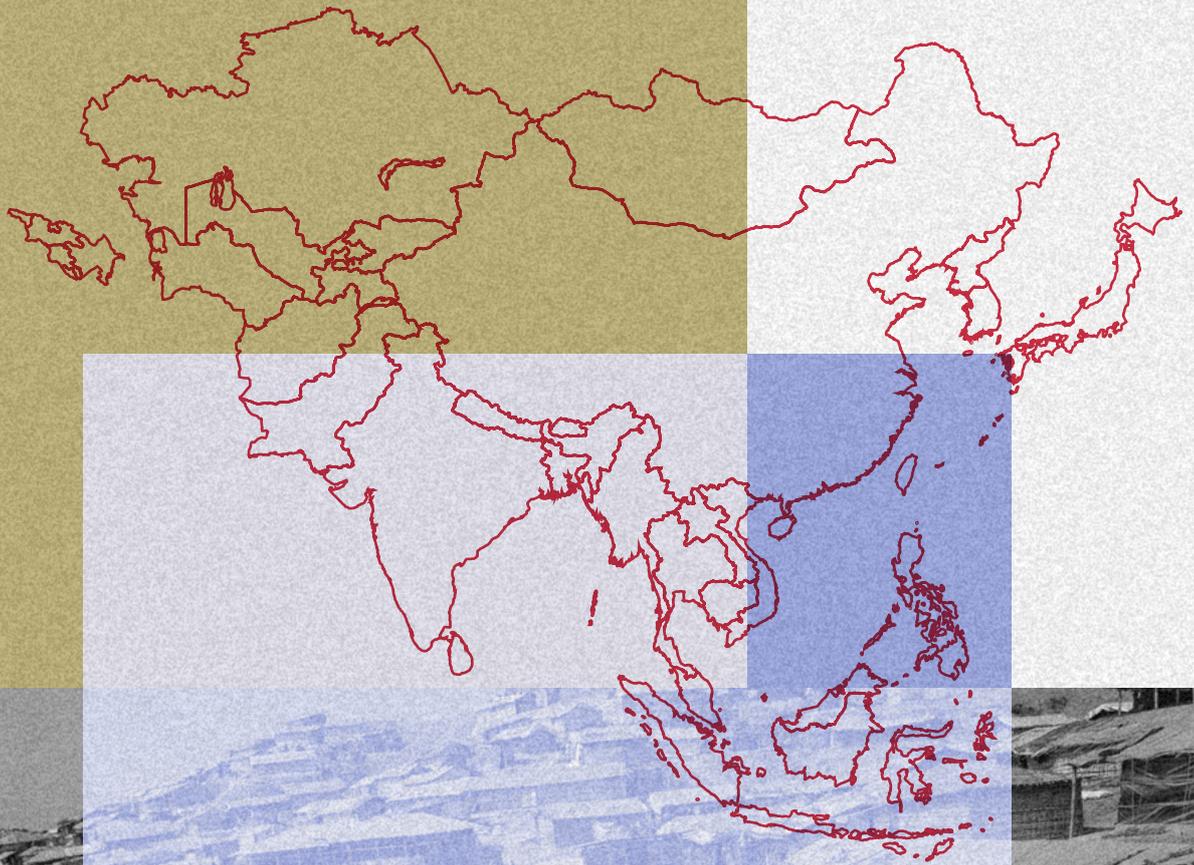
Crimes of sexual violence, particularly rape, remain a significant issue in Somalia, with women and girls in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps the most affected. Perpetrators are rarely prosecuted, and victims are reluctant to come forward and report for several reasons, including a lack of trust in law enforcement and formal justice mechanisms, fear of reprisals, cultural stigmas and taboos. Cultural stigma means that there is also a lack of community and family support for victims that do speak out. For the past seven years, LAW has worked closely with local communities including IDPs, empowering them through legal awareness sessions. These interventions have helped communities achieve a better understanding of legal and social rights and of how and where to report complaints.

In 2024, LAW trained ten Community Champions and four paralegals to hold legal information sessions in the IDP camps in Mogadishu and to refer victims and survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination to high-quality and trauma-informed legal assistance. Over 5,700 individuals participated in legal information sessions organised by LAW's paralegals and Community Champions, on themes including legal avenues for gender-based violence cases, perceptions of gender-based violence, traditional justice avenues, and gender equality.

Based on recommendations from previous interventions, the following three needs have been identified: (1) additional community and survivor advocate support groups within the IDP camps; (2) better access to legal aid and the formal justice system; and (3) strengthened institutional capacity of justice institutions including police officers and prosecutors to handle gender-based violence cases. In 2025, LAW plans to address these three needs through the expansion of the Somalia Programme, including by increasing the capacity and roles of the existing Community Champion structures, providing legal information, assistance and representation to victims of gender-based violence and discrimination and psycho-social and medical referrals where appropriate, and by working closely with focal points, providing training through mentoring and learn-by-doing approaches, on survivor-centered approaches and other necessary skills to protect survivors.

LAW is also exploring **legal and advocacy avenues to end female genital mutilation (FGM) in Somalia, including potential public interest litigation in Somalia**, in the region or with UN Human Rights Mechanisms, and advocacy strategies for the passing of the FGM Bill.

# Asia



# Rohingya Crisis

2024 marked the seventh year since the deadly 2017 “clearance operations” committed by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya community that left over 700,000 Rohingya forcibly displaced into refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. Since that time, the number of displaced has continued to rise. This year saw the resumption of conflict in the Rakhine State between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, leading to a massive impact on the remaining Rohingya civilians there, and a new wave of over 80,000 Rohingya arrivals to Bangladesh.

For the more than one million refugees now living in the camps in Bangladesh, accountability for past and ongoing serious crimes against the Rohingya is essential and urgent. As the only organization working on international justice and accountability for the Rohingya with a presence in the field, LAW with its team of 16 staff based in Cox’s Bazar and a network of 62 Rohingya community-based volunteers, the “Survivor Advocates”, has achieved significant milestones this year – ensuring unprecedented meaningful participation for the Rohingya victims and survivors in the ongoing legal proceedings and laying the foundation of credible and valuable evidence for the key international justice processes.

- **The Gambia v. Myanmar case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ):** In 2024, LAW conducted extensive evidence collection and gathered more than 300 pages of witness testimony for use as evidence in the case against Myanmar at the ICJ on the application of the Genocide Convention. The testimony provided included female, male, and hijra (transgender, intersex, and third gender) survivors of sexual violence– thereby marking an effort to mainstream the gendered dimensions of the violence perpetrated against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

This year also marked progress in two prominent criminal investigations related to the Rohingya crisis at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Argentine federal criminal court under the universal jurisdiction principle.

- **Argentine Federal Criminal Court:** Seven Rohingya witnesses, six of whom are women including survivors of severe sexual violence in Myanmar, gave critical evidence in an investigative hearing in the Argentine court in 2023, supported by LAW. The survivors travelled

from the camps in Cox’s Bazar to Argentine with the LAW team, to testify before the federal court investigating the role of Myanmar authorities into the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya. This was the first time that Rohingya survivors of the “clearance operations” testified before a court of law. The investigating judge in this case has now ordered the arrest warrants against 25 Myanmar officials following the Prosecutor’s request in June 2024. The Prosecutor credited the survivors’ testimony and cited it in his application for the arrest warrants.

The request for arrest warrants includes the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Min Aung Hlaing, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Soe Win, and the former commander of the Western Command, Maung Maung Soe, among others.





“I could not believe I could tell a court about my sufferings. I could not believe it until I stepped into the courtroom. I did it for justice, for my grandchildren, for a future where we can return home with dignity.. Who would have thought that we, the Rohingya women, would be taking the Myanmar military to the court one day” – said Haseeba\*, who testified before the court in Buenos Aires.”

- **International Criminal Court (ICC):** In November 2024, Karim Khan K.C., Prosecutor for the ICC requested the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber to issue an arrest warrant against General Min Aung Hlaing for the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of the Rohingya, committed in Myanmar and in part in Bangladesh – five years since its investigation began on 14 November 2019. LAW represents many survivors who have supported the Prosecutor’s

request for jurisdiction, and thereafter the authorization of the investigation in this situation since 2018, some of whom continue to provide evidence to the OTP in their ongoing investigation. Following this announcement, Prosecutor Khan and members of his team met with LAW the same day to discuss the important development, and continued collaboration in pursuit of justice for Rohingya survivors.



*“I am overwhelmed to learn that the case is now moving forward, and the court could issue a warrant against our perpetrator. I will share this news with all Shanti Mohila members who have supported the case since the beginning. I hope our fight for justice will also hold the military commander accountable for the current violence in Myanmar. We hope that the judges will issue the arrest warrant soon.” – said Kbalida\*, a member of Shanti Mohila.*

In achieving the above, LAW represents over 300 Rohingya victims and survivors and witnesses, ensuring that justice and accountability efforts are pursued in a survivor-centric manner.

At the heart of the work that is done in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh is the LAW team’s partnership with Rohingya Survivor Advocates. The Survivor Advocates are a network of community-based volunteers living within the refugee camps and include male, female and hijra survivors from Myanmar. Through ongoing training and grassroots advocacy, LAW has empowered the network of Survivor Advocates to stand as community leaders who provide refugees living within the camps information on international justice and accountability mechanisms working on the behalf of the Rohingya and education on issues such as gender equality and prevention of domestic violence and child marriage. They also act as peer-support group for LAW’s clients, supporting the health and psycho-social needs of the survivors who are contributing to the international justice processes.

The female members of LAW’s Survivor Advocates network are part of a wider women-led group referred to as **Shanti Mohila** (peace women) who were awarded the title of “Champions of Prevention” by the Office of the Special Adviser on Genocide. This recognition exemplifies the crucial work that women in the Rohingya community have been doing to lead the fight for justice, promote gender equality, and become agents of change for future peace in Myanmar.

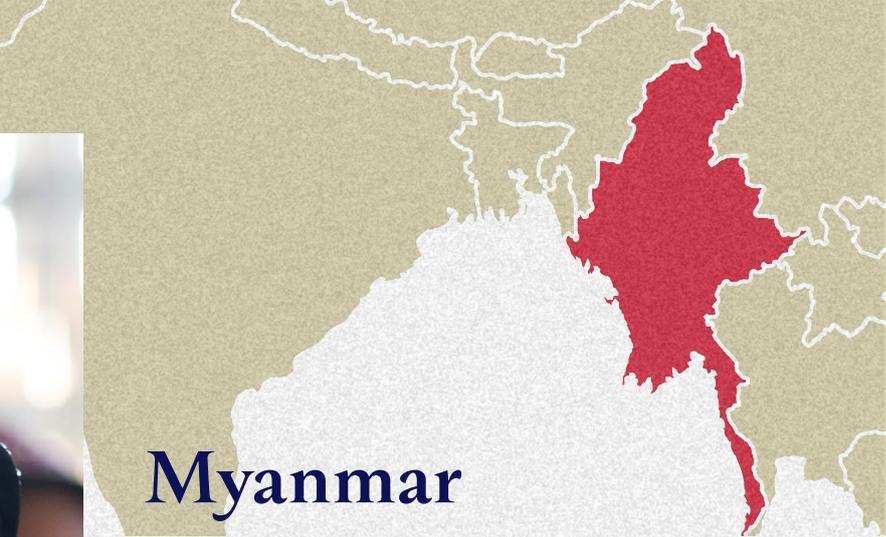
In 2024, the Survivor Advocates reached a total of 10,766 individuals (6,398 women, 4,368 men) across different camps in Cox’s Bazar, ensuring knowledge and understanding of legal rights and processes, mitigating misinformation and reducing tensions and frustrations within the community due to the protracted nature of the conflict.

In addition to its legal contributions and on-the-ground support to the Rohingya community, LAW has carried out research and advocacy strategies to engage the wider, global community to understand the Rohingya crisis, all while seeking to centre the voices and experiences of the survivors.



- In May 2024, an article titled **“What kind of court is this? Perceptions of International Justice Among Rohingya Refugees”** co-authored by Antonia Mulvey was published in the Human Rights Quarterly journal (Vol. 46, No. 2). This article, based on LAW’s 2022 community-participatory research project, “Perceptions of Justice” (led by a team of 32 Rohingya enumerators and involving nearly 500 survey participants), provides insight into what “justice” means for Rohingya people, the community’s expectations, as well as its perceived level of understanding and level of inclusion within the ongoing international justice processes.
- Guided by the priorities of the survivors we work with, LAW led a victims’ trust fund initiative to mobilize dialogue on identifying innovative pathways to secure reparative justice for victims and survivors of grave human rights violations and international crimes in Myanmar.

In September 2024, LAW hosted a high-level roundtable on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, joined by The Gambia, the US, and the National Unity Government. The event brought together government officials, legal practitioners, INGOs, and members of civil society to discuss the need to establish a victims’ trust fund and identify dynamic financing pathways to complement the critically underfunded humanitarian response, and shift from solely punitive towards holistic justice for victims and survivors in Myanmar.



## Myanmar

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and related atrocity crimes remain a significant problem throughout Myanmar, an issue that has gone unaddressed for decades, but which has escalated and continued to be committed with impunity since the unlawful military coup in February 2021. In 2024, LAW's Myanmar Programme worked closely with ten partners to continue to raise awareness, empower survivors, and address identified justice and accountability gaps for CRSV and other atrocity crimes in the post-coup context.

Alongside consortium partners, ALTSEAN and the Mukwege Foundation, LAW supported the convening of a coalition of civil society organisations to launch the Alliance Against CRSV-Myanmar ("Alliance"), the first network of diverse organisations formed to pool efforts and specifically address CRSV in Myanmar. The Alliance consists of approximately 50 representatives from seven primarily women-led civil society organisations that focus on documenting CRSV, advocacy, and/or supporting CRSV survivors. On the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence during Conflict, and in conjunction with its inaugural diplomatic briefing, the Alliance launched its White Flower Campaign to stand with and support survivors of CRSV. This ongoing campaign promotes solidarity with CRSV survivors and has seen participants join from around the world.

Throughout 2024, in collaboration with partners, LAW also supported three network-building workshops that led to the establishment of survivor networks with 79 members in Thai Myanmar border areas and in Bangladesh. These network-building workshops and resulting networks empower survivors

to self-identify needs, justice, and advocacy objectives and provide the opportunity to share stories, experiences, and support across ethnic communities. For many survivors, this was the first opportunity to connect with others who share similar experiences, and many expressed the meaningful impact these connections have had on their lives.



*“I have the right to speak freely here women to women with similar trauma experience [...] People here have suffered a lot, we have children, some are widows. I am here and I am grateful to have the chance to open up with people who suffered from various sufferings. I feel the trust between us. As I came here, I feel self-confident because I can speak very freely.” - Survivor in Mae Hong Son, network building workshop.*

*“A network is essential because together our voices are stronger.” - Member of Usila, survivor network in Cox’s Bazar*

Since the 2021 coup, partners have continuously reported numerous challenges to adequately document incidents of CRSV. These include ongoing stigma related to sexual violence for both women and men, severe security risks which force survivors to frequently relocate, lack of medical and mental health support services, intermittent and unreliable power and internet connectivity, and limited capacity of civil society documenters. Challenges to reporting and documenting CRSV have contributed to and exacerbated the absence of accountability for CRSV, and other atrocity crimes, committed in the post-coup context.

In 2024, much of LAW’s work included working alongside local partners to address these gaps and challenges. LAW developed and delivered eleven capacity building and strategy workshops focused on documenting CRSV with the ultimate goal of pursuing accountability and justice under international law via a survivor-centric approach. Topics of capacity building workshops included: best practices for interviewing vulnerable survivors, including children and survivors of sexual violence; survivor-centric and trauma-informed documentation techniques; and concepts of international law and opportunities for strategic litigation.

Notably, in September 2024, LAW hosted a three-day in-person strategy workshop for local documentation, investigation, and judicial actors on ways to improve coordination for bringing filings under the principle of universal jurisdiction for crimes committed in the post-coup context. This high-level workshop provided an opportunity for key local stakeholders to come together to discuss ongoing documentation challenges, legal strategies, as well as opportunities to collaborate on future case-building initiatives. To further synthesize these efforts, in collaboration with the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI), LAW also commissioned the translation of the IICI’s training modules on the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict into Burmese. LAW disseminated and briefed local grassroots partners on utilizing the translated training modules and guidelines, which are now also publicly available.





## Sri Lanka



In 2024, LAW's Sri Lanka programme successfully increased legal assistance for survivors of SGBV and child abuse alongside broader advocacy efforts to promote gender equality and end domestic violence. The Gender Justice Legal Network (GJLN), a dedicated network of lawyers supported by LAW provided legal assistance and representation to 236 victims of SGBV and child abuse. The youngest was only 5 years old and suffered from burn injuries and subsequently grave sexual abuse.

Heshani, the mother of the 5 year old who was subjected to grave sexual abuse by her second husband, said that if not for the GJLN lawyer who represented her child's interests, she would have succumbed to the violence she faced. "I would have simply laid in my house without any food or water if not for the call from the GJLN Lawyer who said she will help my child get the justice he deserves." With the GJLN lawyers support she was able to secure the custody of her child, continue his case at the Magistrate's Court and access psychosocial services. (Name changed to maintain privacy)

The GJLN conducted awareness sessions for over 230 women and girls from the war-

affected communities in the North, which informed them about legal protection and remedies available in SGBV and child abuse cases ensuring that they can seek legal remedies such as protection orders in cases of domestic violence and effectively complaint to the Police to initiate legal proceedings.

The GJLN Lawyers provided legal services to 12 other clients supporting them to exercise their right to Freedom of Assembly and Association. A groundbreaking social campaign was initiated in November 2024 to combat domestic violence and child abuse which will include 3 phases. The 1st Phase is a submission of policy and legal recommendations to the Minister of Justice to improve justice to survivors of SGBV and child abuse. The 2nd Phase involves engaging with UN mechanisms to encourage Sri Lanka's adherence to its commitments under international treaties that protect women and children. The 3rd Phase is a social media campaign to raise awareness on helplines, how to respond to domestic violence, seek help and how bystanders can support victims. The highlight of this phase is a musical concert to combat the prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse in Sri Lanka by sharing key messages with over 1000 spectators. The proceeds of this concert will support 2 shelter homes for victim-survivors.

Our support to local partners Centre for Equality and Justice (CEJ), Hashtag Generation, National Peace Council (NPC) and Equal Ground continued and 4,484 people benefited from legal awareness sessions, information and facilitation sessions and more than 4,000 users were reached through social media platforms.



# Global Initiatives



## Justice and Accountability for Aid Workers

Since 2022, LAW has undertaken innovative action to improve the protection of humanitarian personnel and their premises and assets through access to justice and accountability. In 2023, LAW joined the Protect Aid Workers initiative to support humanitarian NGOs, and in particular national NGOs, in responding to critical incidents that put the life and well-being of humanitarian workers and their immediate families at risk. It provides practical and financial support that enables staff and their families to better process and recover after incidents, when national humanitarian workers are affected by violence or arrest due to their work. In 2024, LAW provided legal information and assistance in 14 incidents or situations, to more than 50 individuals. In 2024, LAW also submitted two complaints to domestic prosecutors under the principle of universal jurisdiction, for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against humanitarian personnel.

In May 2024, LAW launched its report “Justice and accountability for attacks on aid workers: What are the barriers and how to overcome them?” at a side event during the UN’s Protection of Civilians Week in New York. In preparing the report, LAW consulted with over 200 individuals working for over 50 organisations. The initiative received strong support from UN Member States, NGOs and UN agencies, who increasingly reach out to LAW for collaboration on advocacy efforts.

That same week, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 2730 (2024), which calls on UN Member States to respect and protect United Nations and humanitarian personnel in accordance with their obligations under international law. In November 2024, UN Secretary-General Guterres presented the UNSC with recommendations pursuant to resolution 2730 (2024) to better protect humanitarian personnel and respond to violence by holding perpetrators accountable. The near unanimous support for these recommendations, and the concurrent actions undertaken by UN Member States, show unprecedented commitment to address key issues.

### LAW is in particular focusing on the following:



Ensure that humanitarian and UN and associated personnel survivors and victims have access to timely assistance, including legal services and prompt compensation, and ensure Member States’ support include funding for independent legal assistance, logistical support to states initiating legal proceedings, and support of programs for victims and witnesses’ protection.



Conduct impartial, independent investigations and prosecution of perpetrators and regularly report on investigations and measures taken to protect personnel, and called for enhancing national institutions and international cooperation, including deploying independent investigators in support of authorities that may lack sufficient capacity.



Change the narrative that humanitarian personnel cannot be victims, prevent misinformation/disinformation and criminalisation, and ensure victims, survivors, and all humanitarian personnel including national and locally recruited personnel participate meaningfully in discussions on their protection.



*We need more voices like those of Ms. Antonia Mulvey! Adhering to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in armed conflicts is foundational to reducing the security risks to humanitarians who support people in need. When humanitarian workers and infrastructure are harmed, those responsible must be held accountable in a meaningful and predictable way to serve as a deterrent.*

**Michaud Gilles, UN Under-Secretary-General Safety and Security**

## A Gender Justice Practitioner Hub

In December 2024, at a side event to the 2024 ICC Assembly of State Parties in The Hague, Legal Action Worldwide and its partners launched the Gender Justice Practitioner Hub (GJP Hub), emphasising the need for a new, collaborative, and inclusive approach to justice. Following opening remarks from Dr. Greg French, Australia's Ambassador to The Netherlands, an esteemed panel of experts reflected on their experiences fighting for gender justice and underscored the need for a new organisation to support and connect practitioners.

The Gender Justice Practitioner Hub's mandate is to support and connect practitioners involved in securing gender justice for core international crimes. Through collaboration, coordination and by leveraging decades of experience at national and international levels, the GJP Hub will provide practical tools and assistance to practitioners to help strengthen efforts in pursuit of gender justice.

Over the course of the past two years, LAW conducted a series of roundtables and bilateral discussions with experts

and practitioners to explore and formulate the mandate and structure of the GJP Hub, and to better understand how it could support grassroots, national, regional and international gender justice efforts.

In 2024, roundtables were conducted in The Hague, Geneva, Bogotá, and Nairobi (following roundtables in Beirut, Bangkok and New York that occurred in 2023). Recognising the growing threat to movements seeking gender justice, participants across all roundtables underscored the need for a space for practitioners to safely come together, coordinate and collaborate, echoing a clear finding from previous roundtables. The role of a future Hub as a central repository was also considered. Roundtable participants highlighted the need for precedent, policy and best practice to be curated and made accessible for a wide range of practitioners.

Looking forward, in 2025 GJP Hub will begin its work across three core branches: Knowledge, Network and Helpdesk. You can find out more about the GJP Hub at: [www.gjphub.org](http://www.gjphub.org)



*The Gender Justice Practitioner Hub is a new proposal, designed to address the challenges of inclusive justice. Gender discrimination is one of the things that impedes the prospect of effective inclusive justice. I've seen this over the past 20 years, working on accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. People who experience gender discrimination are at risk of not having their experiences adequately reflected in documentation efforts that address atrocity crimes. Without proactive efforts we know that their voices are likely to be silenced in these processes.*

**Michelle Jarvis, Deputy Head, International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM)**

## Access to justice for victims of child sexual violence and abuse

From South Sudan to Bangladesh, to Syria and Iraq, 2024 has seen legal developments that marked important steps forward towards justice for child victims.

In 2024, LAW's legal aid clinics in the **South Sudanese** towns of Wau and Malakal received a total of 38 cases with 9 children (girls) being represented in the courts and in June 2024, and a groundbreaking decision was made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination (CEDAW) to register a communication against **South Sudan** on behalf of 35 South Sudanese women who suffered from brutal CRSV during the conflict. 14 of the women were children at the time of the violations.

Also, for the first time in **South Sudan**, a criminal complaint was filed in October 2024 for the prosecution of rape and gang rape as a war crime under the Geneva Convention Act (GCA) 2012. This Act domesticates the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the three Additional Protocols of 1977. LAW represents three survivors of rape committed by soldiers during the conflict in 2017. Two of the survivors were children at the time the crimes were committed.

In **Bangladesh**, LAW conducted an extensive evidence collection exercise to contribute to The Gambia's response to Myanmar's Counter memorial in the ICJ case Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v Myanmar). One of the survivors who provided a statement is part of the Hijra community,



comprised of gender non-conforming transgender individuals. The survivor was 16-years old at the time of the violation. This is the first time that a member of the Hijra community has participated in the ICJ proceedings by providing evidence. The report "It is a Forever Stigma" The Role of Gender Discrimination in the Syrian Government's Detention and Torture System, which outlined the role of gender discrimination in the government's vast detention and torture system in **Syria**, is based on the testimonies of 69 former detainees (33 males, 36 females), including 3 children.

Finally, LAW is supporting a group of survivors from the Yazidi, Shabakh, and Christian communities in **Iraq** to obtain reparations for crimes committed against them by ISIS/Da'esh. The survivors include men and women who were children at the time of their detention and abuse by Daesh.

On the advocacy front, recognising the crucial role of youth-led organisations and youth support groups in the community working to end child sexual abuse in conflict, LAW launched a Small Grants initiative in October 2024. This initiative supports grassroots organisations in increasing access to justice for child victims. Grants of \$10,000 USD were made available for projects focused on 'Breaking the Silence' around conflict-related sexual violence. A month later, LAW launched the **Child Victim Response Database**, a tool designed to make best practices in responding to child victims more accessible. The database compiles resources from over 65 national, regional, and international justice mechanisms, helping practitioners find relevant guidance.

# Financials



2024 Income (grants & donations)	\$9,827,974
2024 Expenditure (program & operations)	\$7,782,458
Anticipated funds for 2025	\$11,217,814

# Consolidated Income Statement

INCOME	Note	2024 USD	2023 USD
Donations received	3.1	855,228	1,264,362
		855,228	1,264,362
of which restricted			
of which free			
Contributions from public authorities	3.1	8,963,641	4,779,784
Other income		9,105	10,425
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>9,827,974</b>	<b>6,054,571</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3.2</b>		
Salaries		(3,787,227))	(3,626,862)
Travel		(608,500)	(592,401)
Premises expense		(296,302)	(202,620)
Office expenses		(175,172)	(295,918)
Professional and consultant fees		(2,685,582)	(1,752,790)
Workshop and training		(229,675)	(181,642)
Other expenses		-	(9,185)
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>(7,782,458)</b>	<b>(6,661,419)</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT</b>		<b>2,045,515</b>	<b>(606,848)</b>
<b>FINANCIAL RESULT</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>(92,518)</b>	<b>(64,450)</b>
<b>EXTRAORDINARY RESULT</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>(12,436)</b>
<b>RESULT BEFORE CHANGE IN FUND CAPITAL</b>		<b>1,953,470</b>	<b>(683,734)</b>
Change in fund capital		(1,724,894)	680,807
<b>ANNUAL RESULT</b>		<b>228,576</b>	<b>(2,927)</b>

# Consolidated Balance Sheet

ASSETS	Note	2024 USD	2023 USD
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3.5	3,312,374	1,709,184
Other short-term receivables		354,106	41,765
Account receivables	3.6	867,122	1,601,200
Prepaid expenses		25,669	30,152
		4,559,271	3,382,302
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Financial assets		46,361	36,943
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>4,605,632</b>	<b>3,419,254</b>
<b>FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade payables and other liabilities	3.7	71,571	72,366
Accrued expenses		589,117	609,841
Restricted funds		3,513,180	2,533,852
		4,173,869	3,216,057
<b>Funds</b>			
Capital fund		203,188	206,114
Result of the current year		228,576	(2,927)
Total funds		431,763	203,187
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>		<b>4,605,632</b>	<b>3,419,254</b>

# Thank You

LAW's Board and Committee Members	Former board members
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United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture	U.S. Department of State



## Photo Captions

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# Annual Report 2024

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